

Submission
No 496

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I suffered a tremendous amount of birth trauma with my first birth due to a completely unnecessary induction. The birth was intensely traumatic and affected my journey into motherhood.

I was induced using a Cooks catheter which was extremely painful. When commencing the procedure the doctor stated "hmmm your cervix really is closed tight" and so I asked if the induction was necessary. He paused, hesitated and then said "well we may as well go ahead as you're here now?" I wish in that moment I knew I had an option but I was told I was at risk of cord prolapse and the death of my baby. Completely impossible with a closed cervix!! This risk was suggested purely because my baby was not engaged in the birth canal and still moving about which I now know is also ENTIRELY NORMAL.

Anyway, we proceeded and I suffered through the most horrific pelvic floor damage done by the balloon and subsequent birth where my body and baby were forced to do something neither of which were ready for. I had wanted an all natural birth, however after 14 hours of horrific forced contractions, another doctor arrived and began threatening me with a C-section, something I did not want. She suggested that I needed to "calm down" or there would be no other option!!!! Thankfully a midwife suggested to me that I accept an epidural (something I also did not want) and that it might help my body relax and birth vaginally.

At this point I was so exhausted so I accepted. This forced me onto my back in bed of course to birth which is not at all an optimal birth position! I was able to birth my baby vaginally however I did experience substantial tearing being forced to push, unable to work with my body thanks to the epidural. After this marathon my baby was thankfully born healthy however I was so traumatised and exhausted. But this proved to be nothing compared to the horrific breastfeeding journey that followed. Due to the induction and lack of natural hormone process my milk was nowhere near ready and did not come in for 5 days. Being born on a public holiday weekend there was no lactation consultant available. My nipples were bleeding profusely and became infected very quickly, however I was assured her latch looked good, bleeding can happen and to keep going!!!!

The pain was unbearable and I could not at all enjoy my new baby. I subsequently had to pay a lot of money to a private lactation consultant who was horrified at the condition of my breasts and made a formal complaint against the hospital. The damage done is difficult to express - I felt like a failure, and broken shell of a woman. Desperately guilty I was not enjoying this profound change and wondering what was "wrong" with me!!!

My body still suffers from the damage inflicted today. This cannot continue to happen. We risk an epidemic of damaged mothers and when we have damaged mothers - we have a damaged society. I have since become very informed about birth and know that what was done to my body and baby was very wrong!